

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 00893 031832Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-13 ACDA-07 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 /090 W
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R 031800Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4576
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0893

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GY, CU
SUBJECT: THREAT OF CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN BELIZE

1. FONMIN WILLS HAS TOLD ME THAT DURING HIS VISIT TO PORT OF SPAIN TO ATTEND THE CARICOM DEVELOPMENT BANK MEETING, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM BELIZE NAMED SHOMAN (PH) APPROACHED HIM AND OTHER DELEGATES. SHOMAN ALLEGED THAT THE BRITISH/GUATEMALAN/ BELIZE TALKS HAD BROKEN DOWN AND THE BRITISH WERE NOT ACTING IN A WAY AS TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. BELIZIAN STRATEGY AT THE MOMENT WAS TO TRY TO FORCE BRITAIN TO MAKE PUBLIC THE FAILURE OF THE TALKS. IF THE BRITISH WOULD NOT GIVE BELIZE INDEPENDENCE. BY JUNE, THEY WILL MAKE A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. IN PORT OF SPAIN, SHOMAN WAS LOBBYING WITH THE MINISTERS TO PERSUADE THE VARIOUS CARIBBEAN GOVERNMENTS TO PUT TOGETHER A CARIBBEAN MILITARY FORCE TO BE STATIONED IN BELIZE. SHOMAN INDICATED THAT HE HAD BEEN FEELING OUT THE CUBANS AND THE CUBANS HAD RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO THE IDEA.

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PAGE 02 GEORGE 00893 031832Z

2. WILLS CLAIMED HE HAD WARNED SHOMAN THAT CUBA'S INVOLVEMENT WOULD CREATE A MAJOR HEMISPHERIC PROBLEM. WILLS HAD SAID THAT EVEN IF BURNHAM WOULD AGREE TO SEND A GUYANESE CONTINGENT, HE WAS CERTAIN THAT ANY GUYANESE OR JAMAICAN TROOPS WOULD STAY AROUND ONLY AS LONG AS GUATEMELA DID NOT ATTACK. GUYANA HAD NO STOMACH FOR GETTING INVOLVED IN AN ANGOLA-LIKE SITUATION.

3. WILLS SAID THAT HE WILL ARGUE WITH BURNHAM THAT THE BRITISH STILL HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR BELIZE. WILLS' MESSAGE TO ME WAS THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO SHORE UP THE BRITISH BACKBONE ON THE BELIZE QUESTION. HE FAVORED BELIZIAN INDEPENDENCE BUT SAID THAT LARGER POWERS SUCH AS BRITAIN OR THE UNITED STATES SHOULD PROVIDE SOME GUARANTEE OF ITS SECURITY AGAINST A GUATEMALAN ATTACK.

4. WHEN I EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT CASTRO WOULD GET HIMSELF ENGAGED AGAINST A RATHER FORMIDABLE GUATEMALAN MILITARY FORCE, WILLS CONTRADICTED ME SAYING THAT THE DOMINANT IMPRESSION HE HAD OF CASTRO FROM HIS MEETING WITH HIM IN JANUARY AND EVERYTHING ELSE HE KNEW ABOUT CASTRO WAS THAT HE WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST AN ADVENTURER. AFTER THE SUCCESS IN ANGOLA, HE WAS FEELING VERY CONFIDENT OF HIMSELF. THERE WAS A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT CUBA MIGHT GET INVOLVED IN BELIZE.

5. ALTHOUGH I DO NOT DOUBT THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF BELIZE APPROACHED WILLS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISCERN HOW MUCH OF THE "CUBAN THREAT" CONCEPT CAME FROM THE BELIZE REPRESENTATIVE AND HOW MUCH WAS DUE TO WILLS' OCCASIONAL TENDENCY TO OVER-INTERPRET INFORMATION.
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